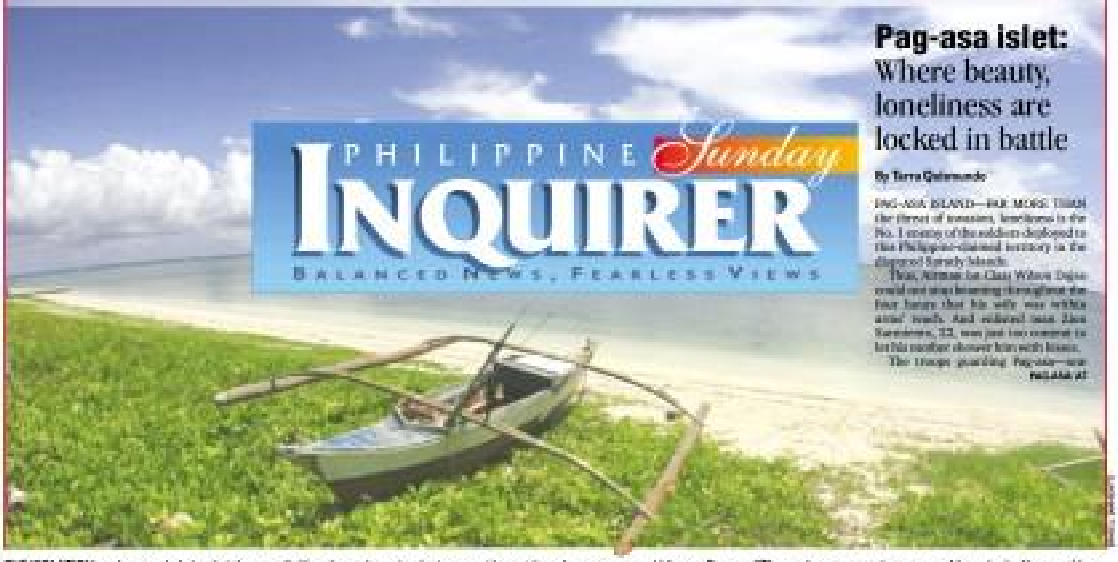
Sunday, May 4, 2008 ★★ Vol. 23 / No. 146 website: www.inquirer.net

PHILIPPINE Sunday INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS



Pag-asa islet: Where beauty, loneliness are locked in battle

By Tarra Quismundo

PAG-ASA ISLAND—FAR MORE THAN the threat of invasion, loneliness is the No. 1 enemy of the soldiers deployed to this Philippine-claimed territory in the disputed Spratly Islands.

Thus, Airman 1st Class Wilson Dajao could not stop beaming throughout the four hours that his wife was within arms' reach. And enlisted man Alex Sarmiento, 22, was just too content to let his mother shower him with kisses.

The troops guarding Pag-asa—one

PAG-ASA A7

THE ISOLATION can be overwhelming, but the unspoiled beaches and seamless horizon provide a cutting edge over even world-famous Boracay. "There, when you go underwater, you'd see plastic. Here, you'd see fishes," says soldier Wilson Dajao of Pag-asa, home to 50 composite troops from the Army, Navy and Air Force on a six-month tour of duty and some 300 civilians. It's a barangay in Palawan's municipality of Kalayaan.

Cory looks in pink of health

Rice crisis tops agenda of Asean Bali meet

NUSA DUA, INDONESIA—SOUTHEAST Asian nations meeting in Bali have agreed to cooperate over the rice market, Malaysia's trade minister said yesterday, as rocketing prices continue to shock a region where the grain is a core part of most meals.

The issue of food security has hijacked the weekend trade meeting of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) on this Indonesian resort island.

Malaysian Trade Minister Muhyiddin Yassin told reporters that a statement due to be released later yesterday—a day earlier than expected—would include rice.

Asked whether Asean members had agreed to cooperate over rice, he said, "Yes, yes," without elaborating.

Indonesian Trade Minister Mari Pangestu said earlier yesterday that rice had been a key part of the discussions.

"We are discussing it within the Asean context. The rice issue may be the most important one, because rice is the staple for all the members," the Indonesian official told reporters.

RICE A11



CORY'S FAVORITES Ex-President Aquino joins her favorite prayer warriors at her favorite place of worship, the St. Joseph Adoration Convent of the Pink Sisters in New Manila on Saturday. It also marks the start of the Our Lady of Fatima novena.

She makes 1st appearance with Pink Sisters

By Beverly T. Natividad

SHE DIDN'T WEAR THE SIGNATURE COLOR the whole democratic world has come to identify with her. She wore pink after her favorite prayer warriors. And she said so herself.

Former President Corazon Aquino made her first appearance in public yesterday during a Mass for her recovery from colon cancer at the St. Joseph Adoration Convent on Hemady Street in Quezon City.

She rejoined her "prayer brigade," the Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters, more popularly known as the Pink Sisters, to offer prayers for her healing and full recovery.

CORY A7

INQUIRER WISHES COME TRUE

Homecoming: Gift for pa, promise to ma

By Ryan D. Rosauro
Inquirer Mindanao

OZAMIZ CITY—LIKE A LONG-lost child, 80-year-old Ruben Valconcha Sr. returned to this his hometown on April 21 and tightly hugged his nephew, Jose Cebrido Jr. who met him at the door of his sister's home.

Valconcha made it back home after his son Marlon was chosen among the 22 loyal readers of the Philippine Daily Inquirer to be granted their "wish." Marlon's wish was for his father to be able to visit his hometown again and touch base with his surviving siblings and other relatives.

When it finally happened, it called for a celebration. After taking a seat in the living room, Valconcha asked for a bottle of beer, drawing a hearty laugh from Cebrido.

HOMECOMING A10

Dream vacation for family that reads together

By Kenneth M. del Rosario

FOR SCIENCE TEACHER NORIA LIM, reading the Inquirer is just as important as eating a good breakfast.

Food nourishes the body, she says, while the Inquirer's news and information energizes the mind.

There's nothing like starting the day sipping coffee and reading her favorite newspaper, Noria says.

On most mornings, Noria, her husband Paul and their 7-year-old son Krelian have breakfast together while reading their favorite sections of the Inquirer.

Indeed, the family that reads together, should vacation together.

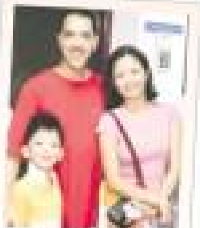
So when Noria wished for a three-day, two-night vacation in Bohol—because her son Krelian wanted to "dig up all the chocolates" in the world-famous Chocolate Hills—the Inquirer couldn't resist granting her wish.

Noria was one of 22 Inquirer loyal readers chosen to have their wishes granted during the paper's 22nd anniversary last December.

Last week, the Lim family was seen packing on their "dream vacation."

"Krelian was really excited [when he learned we were going to Bohol]," Noria says. "He thought that if he could eat just one hill [of the Chocolate Hills], he would become really fat."

DREAMS A10



DESTINATION: BOHOL Noria Lim with husband Paul and son Krelian

Pinoy English teacher gets award from New York Times

By Kristine L. Alave

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN THE classroom of Feliciano Jaime "Chito" Atienza, who teaches English to immigrants, seems less of a classroom and more a United Nations peace panel.

In Atienza's class in Queens, New York, culture-shocked (and sometimes shell-shocked) students who speak zero English not only master a new language, they are also helped by people they consider their enemies back in their motherland.

Atienza, winner of The New York Times 2008 English for Speakers of Other Languages (Esol) Teacher of the Year award, has been teaching English to immigrants for two decades. He recalls one class where Afghans and Russians glared at each other. There were also students, fresh from their war-ravaged Bosnia, who refused to speak to one another.

"The class was divided into two. You can really feel their hatred toward each other," he says.

With some coaxing, the warring classmates set aside their past grief and became friends. After all, they were Americans now, he re-

PINOYS A16



Exercise your brains, 'baby boomers' told

SAN FRANCISCO—TENS OF MILLIONS of baby boomers are encountering the signs, by turns amusing and disconcerting, that accompany the decline of the brain's acuity: A good friend's name suddenly vanishing from memory; a frantic search for eyeglasses only to find them atop the head; milk taken from the refrigerator then put away in a cupboard.

EXERCISE A11

JOB Market
Build your future with us

FIESTA! What began as a patchwork of pagan rituals and Christian tradition has since assumed secular allure with costumed dancing, extravagant feasting and a carnival of superlatives.
Sunday Magazine



Ryan Agoncillo captures the essence of being on Cuyo Island in Palawan.
Entertainment/ H3

The businesses that Jack built: He started with P1,000, now owns Dangwa transport. His tip: Don't put money in your pocket or you'll be tempted to buy unnecessary things.
Sunday Biz /B1

Second FrontPage

WEATHER FORECAST

'Leave big business out of it'

Gov't has no call to drag traders into fight with Meralco, says solon

By TJ Burgonio

WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?

President Macapagal-Arroyo's call on big business to join forces with the government to get power rates lowered was "unnecessary" and puzzling, said Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Teodoro Casiño.

Where's Mikey?

Decide on merits

Ideal partnership

Gov't behind GSIS vs Meralco, says Bunye

By Michael Lim Ubac

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **NAME NAMES,** Palace tells US on corruption /A3
- **BRITAIN** to send peace talks experts /A3
- **PAYATAS** biogas facility to help climate /A17

Irri proposes 9-pt rice plan

Lift property conversion ban, developers urge

Gov't eyes penal farm's ricefields

Special collection for Catholic media

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THERE WILL BE a special collection at Catholic Masses today in support of the Church's media apostolate.

Manila Auxiliary Bishop Bernardino Cortez, chair of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' Episcopal Commission for Social Communications and Mass Media (ECSCM), urged the faithful to contribute in a statement posted on the CBCP website.

"We have a special collection on that day (May 4) for the support of our social communications apostolate," the bishop said.

Sunday is the feast of the Ascension on the Church calendar. It is also "World Day of Communications."

The Church, according to the CBCP website, has celebrated World Day of Communications together with the Ascension of Jesus Christ since 1967—after Vatican II—in recognition of the vital role of members of the mass media "in gathering and disseminating all forms of information for the transformation of man and his society."

Years back, the special collection was mandated by the CBCP for the development of local Church media work, particularly of the commission Cortez heads.

The ECSCM's primary role is to organize and support the Catholic mass media on radio, television, film and the press in the country.

Cortez said the Church's mass media includes 40 Catholic radio stations nationally owned by particular dioceses, several fixed and mobile TV stations, a few diocesan newspapers, a couple of production studios and media centers, and a Catholic news service (CBCP-News), the latest addition to the Church's media ministry in the country.

"The Catholic media apostolate offers us an alternative media, a shelter, in order to allow us to grow and be strengthened in our faith. In the midst of all the noise being peddled that only stifle our quest for the true meaning of life and may even confuse the truths of our faith," Cortez said.

The Daily Gospel

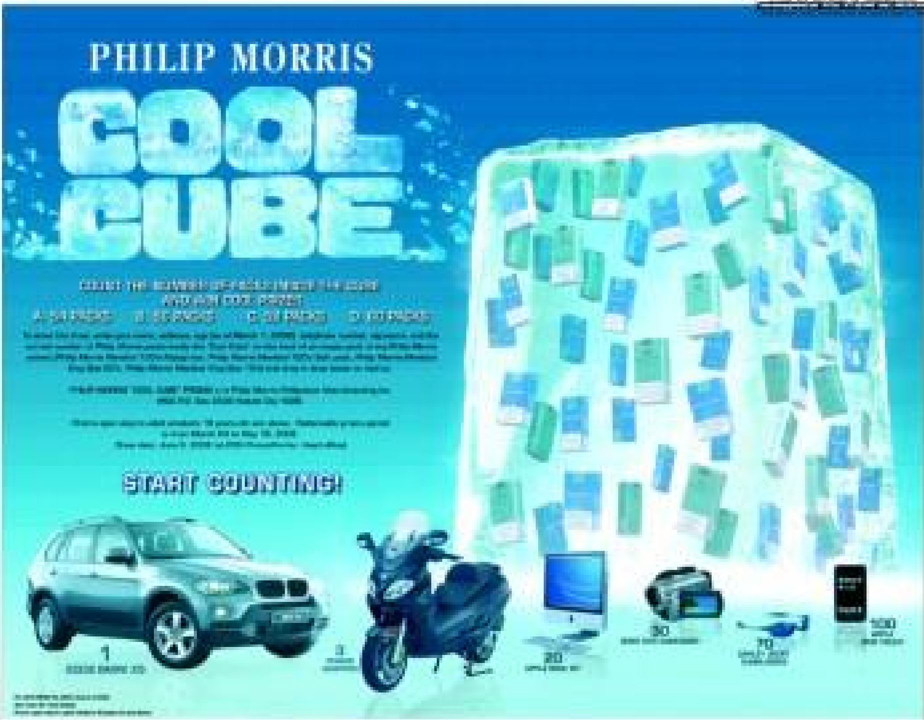
Sunday, May 4, 2008
Ascension Sunday

1st Reading: Acts 1:1-11

2nd Reading: Eph 1:17-23

Gospel: Mt 28:16-20

Commentary



Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health



'Scrambling' oil firms raise prices by P1 a liter

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PRICES OF GASOLINE, DIESEL and kerosene went up by P1 a liter and of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by P1 a kilogram over the weekend, as oil firms scrambled to recover as much as P7 a liter in unrecovered costs for gasoline and diesel.

Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. raised its pump prices at 12:01 a.m. yesterday, followed by Petron Corp., Chevron Philippines Inc. and Eastern Petroleum Corp. at 6 a.m.

Total (Philippines) Corp. increased its LPG prices at 12:01 a.m. and its gasoline, diesel and kerosene prices at noon yesterday.

The oil firms cited the continued rise in international oil prices, as well as their under-recoveries as the reason for the latest price hike, the ninth for the year for gasoline, diesel and kerosene for a total of P[illegible] a liter.

All-time high

According to industry data, the regional benchmark Dubai crude averaged $103.41 a barrel in April, almost $7 a barrel higher than the March average of $96.75 a barrel.

Dubai crude surged to an all-time high of $110.20 a barrel on April 28.

In a telephone interview yesterday, Eastern Petroleum chair and chief executive Fernando Martinez said oil firms had no choice but to raise prices by P1 a liter this time—twice the usual 50-centavo-a-liter price adjustment.

He pointed out that they had yet to recover as much as P7 a liter in fuel costs—P3 a liter for gasoline and P4 a liter for diesel.

Hard times

"These are really hard times. International prices are going up very quickly yet we can't just fully reflect these increases at the pump. Because we've been adjusting prices by 50-centavo-a-liter increments, we now have to recover as much as P7 a liter," he said.

Geopolitical issues such as recent attacks on a Nigerian oil pipeline, a threatened workers' strike at a Scotland refinery, and the reported firing of rockets at a Japanese oil tanker by pirates all contributed to the global supply uncertainty resulting in higher prices.

With the new price adjustment, prices of premium unleaded gasoline now ranged between P46.17 and P50.65, diesel between P38.91 and P43, and kerosene between P43.20 and P48.80 a liter, inclusive of the 12-percent value-added tax.



Explain hikes, oil execs told

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE GOVERNMENT HAS SUMMONED the top officials of local oil companies to explain the latest round of fuel price increases.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes was scheduled to meet today with oil company executives ask them "to explain the basis for the computation" for the P1 a liter increase in pump prices and P1 per kilogram of liquefied petroleum gas.

Make computations public

"[We] we must understand that the price of oil in the world market is high, thus affecting local prices," said Bunye in an interview over radio dzRB.

Malacañang, through the Department of Energy, wants the oil firms to make public their accounting procedures in computing the prices of their oil products.

"Transparency is important. That's being sought by the private sector," said Bunye.

Give it a chance

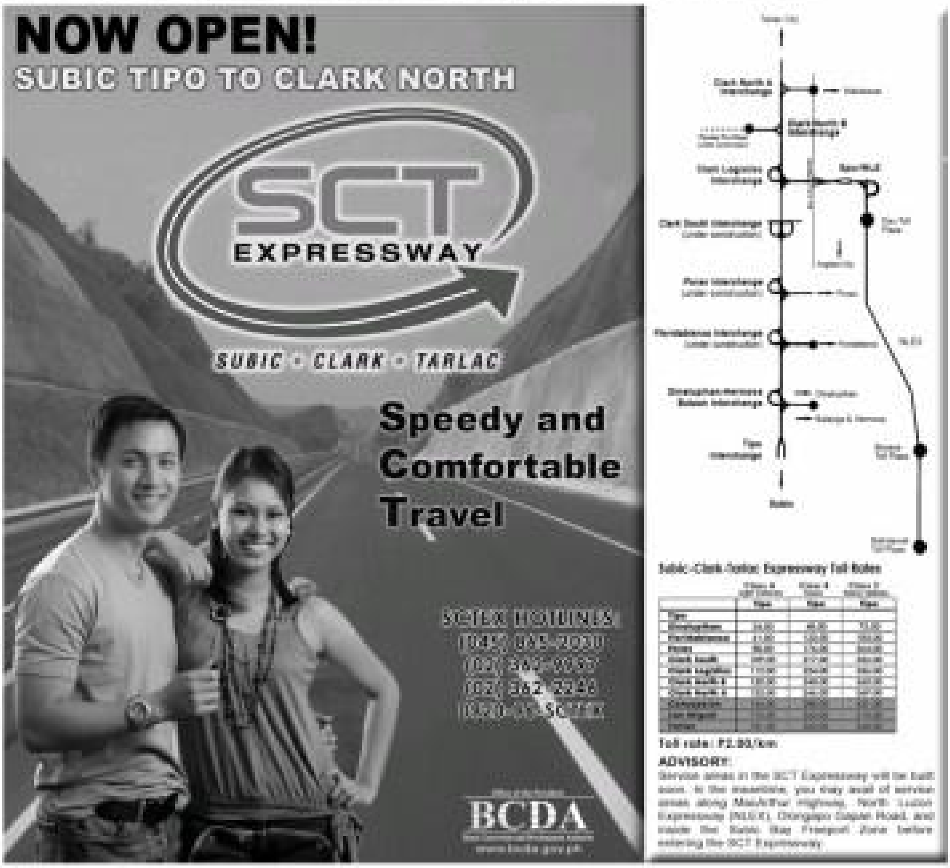
To determine if the adjustment was reasonable, the DOE will verify each firm's return on equity (ROE).

Bunye said the DOE had asked private audit firm SGV to help it look at the books of the oil firms.

The results of the audit may be expected within the next few weeks, he said.

Bunye called on transport groups like Piston to avoid staging transport strikes at this point, which could worsen the oil situation. He called on them to be "reasonable" and give their dialogues with the DOE a chance to work.

"In the past we had successful dialogues, I hope Piston will be reasonable," he said.



Cory looks in pink …

Special rosary

Long history

Pray for the country

Pag-asa isle: Where beauty …

Rare family days

'Loneliness pay'

37.2 hectares

'A real community'

Fishing, etc.

Name names, Palace tells US on report of AFP corruption

By Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY disputed the unfavorable US State Department Country Report on terrorism released Wednesday, saying that its fight against terrorism was saddled by problems such as corruption, limited resources and low salaries of security forces.

Deputy Presidential Spokesperson Anthony Golez called on the United States state department to name names and seriously help in prosecuting corrupt Filipino generals and other military officials alluded to in the report.

"In the spirit of actually helping government in such corruption, these issues must be brought to the right authorities in order for an investigation to happen," Golez told the Inquirer.

He said the White House should help in the investigation by giving "details to the right authorities, so that cases can prosper."

He added: "Any government cannot deny that there is corruption that's happening in its country, but our government is now very strong in its anticorruption activities."

He said President Macapagal-Arroyo had instituted many reforms in the bureaucracy to make sure that government officials were made to account for their actions.

Still a serious threat

He cited the increase in the budget of the Office of the Ombudsman, the elimination of red tape and revenue agencies' pursuit of tax evaders.

The US State Department Country Report on terrorism for the East Asia and Pacific Region had concluded that the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) regional terrorist network linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network remained a serious threat to Western and regional interests, particularly in Indonesia and the southern Philippines.

Rumors

It said reports were rife that personal profit was responsible for the escape of JI top bomber Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi from the heavily guarded national police headquarters at Camp Crame, Quezon City in 2003, although Al-Ghozi was killed three months later in a gun battle with security forces in Mindanao.

The report also cited alleged connivance between the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the military, citing as an example the ease with which ASG members escaped from a hospital compound that had been surrounded by soldiers in Lamitan, Basilan, in 2001.

Golez said Malacañang viewed corruption and terrorism as separate matters.

"Our stand is—we cannot, in our country, directly link corruption with terroristic activities," he said.

"In the history and culture of our country, Filipinos never resorted to terroristic activities. Bombing is not a result of increased poverty incidence. Second, there is no direct correlation between corruption and poverty incidence because we know a lot of countries that are very progressive but are perceived to be corrupt."

He added: "Filipinos still believe in our institutions, in our systems, and on top of everything, they have strong religious beliefs, or a strong faith, in religion as a source of solutions."

Notable successes

Golez said the administration scored notable successes in the fight against terrorism, citing examples in the death of ASG leaders Khaddafy Janjalani at the hands of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the capture and arrest of 30 ASG members and the killing of 12."

Golez pointed out that in any part of the world, terrorism could not be solved overnight. "In the same manner that other nations, particularly the US, still have a problem with terrorism given their sophistication and logistics."



SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE! Dancers from Carmen, Cebu, perform a native dance during the Aliwan Festival held yesterday at the Quirino Grandstand at the Luneta in Manila.

Help, don't blame us, peace official tells Malaysia

Britain to send peace talk pros to help RP, MILF

Homecoming: Gift for pa, vow to ma



A gift for dad

Lonely times

Fond memories

Happy reunions

A father's legacy

Luck is in the family

The secret promise

Dream vacation for family that reads together

Bohol report

Life is a box of chocolates

Dolphin-watching

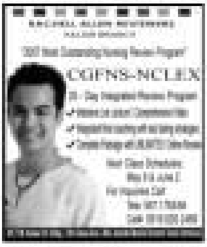
First time

Genuine wish

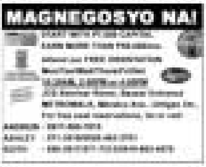
Cop had 'drugs' but no helmet

By Tina G. Santos

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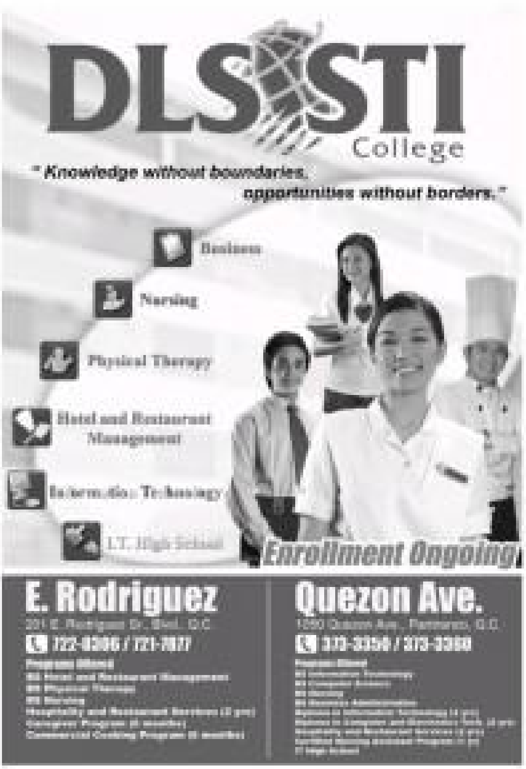










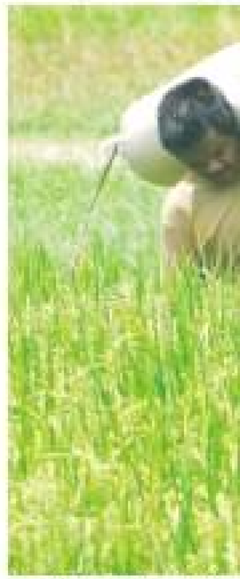


Agri chief confident Viets, Thais will sell



Gov't to gov't

Lower prices



Rice crisis tops

No. 1 importer, exporter

Human rights issue

...l rice to RP

Aggressive procurement

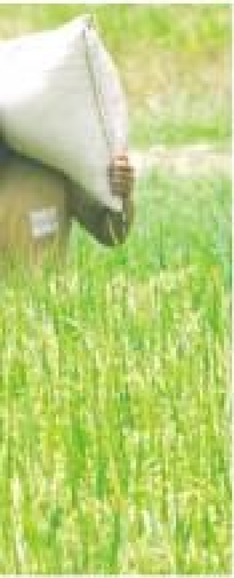
Why we're No. 1

Exercise your brains, boomers told

Brain products

Infancy

No detection tests



...agenda ...

Food aid pledges



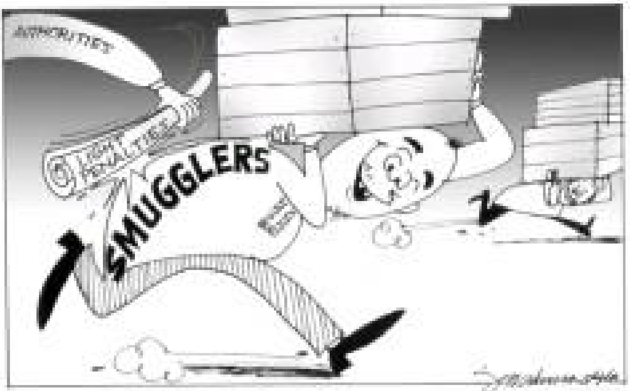
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

The Garcia gambit

EDITORIAL

[illegible]



'Moot and academic'

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

[illegible]

One with you

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

[illegible]

OPINION

Supreme Court-media relation

WITH DUE RESPECT

Artemio V. Panganiban



Born to run

REBEL WITHOUT A CLUE

Patricia Evangelista



The true picture of GDP 2007

COMMENTARY

Roy V. Señeres

> The 7.3 percent growth was as natural as the growth of an Acacia tree receiving its nutrients from fertilizers

Israel's mission

WORLD VIEW

Shlomo Ben-Ami



> Metaphorically, Israel's national psyche oscillates between 'Tel Aviv' and 'Jerusalem'

Project Syndicate

TALK of the TOWN

US, IMF role in Haiti's food riots

By Bill Quigley



PROTESTERS denounce Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis in Port-au-Prince for soaring food costs. The Haitian Senate fired Alexis on April 12 after a week of food riots and looting that left at least six people dead.



Fast facts

Major cause

Miami rice invasion

World Bank, too

Third largest importer

Subsidies, tariff barriers

Downward spiral

Far from alone

Hunger riots

Tied aid

Citizens' donations

Irri, WB and Philippine rice imports

By Jessica Reyes-Cantos

RP'S BIGGEST BIOGAS REDUCTION PLANT

Payatas to help climate, and make money, too

BI uncovers sale of fake passports in New Zealand

Secular Morality and UP talk set



Pinoy English teacher gets …

INQUIRER Mindanao

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Editor: Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief: Nico A. Alconaba

The rescue of Magdiwata watershed

By Chris Panganiban
San Francisco, Agusan del Sur

ABOUT A DECADE AGO, IT WAS AN ENDANgered mountain with a receding water source. Now, Mount Magdiwata has a regenerated forest cover and supplies more than enough water to thousands of residents in San Francisco, Agusan del Sur.

Efforts to rescue Magdiwata, which was declared a permanent watershed forest reserve by Presidential Proclamation No. 282, began in 1997 when the San Francisco Water District (SFWD) initiated a program to rehabilitate 938 hectares of denuded and open grasslands out of the mountain's 1,823 ha. So far, 803 ha of land have been reforested.

Elmer Luzon, SFWD general manager, said the program had brought more than just a sufficient water supply for its 4,300 household-consumers. "In one source alone, we can already tap at least 17 liters per second, a significant increase from five liters per second in 2004," he said.

An increase of only 12 liters per second is enough to supply the daily needs of 500 households.

The project was not an easy feat, Luzon said, citing difficult challenges, especially from farmers engaged in slash-and-burn farming, rampant timber poaching, unregulated sand and gravel quarrying at the foot of the mountain, and small-scale gold mining.

Not an easy feat

When the SFWD asked for the delineation of watershed boundaries, it had to deal with Picop (Paper Industries Corp. of the Philippines) Resources Inc. (PRI), which obtained a logging concession area in the lower portions of the mountain during the Marcos regime.

Luzon said the water district persevered and forged a co-management agreement with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the municipal government. The SFWD was to spearhead the implementation of the sustainable rehabilitation program for Magdiwata.

Caretakers

The agency has already invested P13 million, mostly for reforestation activities and payment to land claimants and residents within the 200-meter buffer zone at the foot of the mountain. "As of December last year, there were 86 former occupants who had waived their rights to lands covering 445 ha as the SFWD had already paid them a total of P3 million," Luzon said.

To prevent former occupants from continuing their destructive ways, Luzon said the SFWD had offered them jobs as caretakers of high-value fruit trees planted in the area. They will get a 10-percent share of the fruits, he said.

Moreover, they were allowed to plant vegetables organically within the buffer zone.

"The sustainable livelihood program has already benefited ... at least 19 families. They are now gainfully enjoying the harvests of their vegetable gardens and the crops harvested from the coconut trees in their areas," Luzon said.

Now, the SFWD calls the beneficiaries "social fence" because they have agreed to also serve as forest guards of Magdiwata, he said.



A VIEW of Mt. Magdiwata at the town park in San Francisco, Agusan del Sur, showing the lush greenery of the rehabilitated mountain, which is also the only source of potable water to thousands of residents.



SHADED part is the area inhabited by the Mandaya, Mansaka, Dibabawon and Manggangan tribes of Monkayo, Compostela Valley. The same have been titled as ancestral domain of the tribes headed by Datu Carlito Ebarra. NCIP officials said the title issued to the group of Ebarra is confined only to the 38,000 hectares found in Monkayo.

Rice shortage ain't new for Compostela Valley

By Frinston Lim
Nabunturan, Compostela Valley

FACED WITH INSUFFICIENT RICE PRODUCTION and unsure rice supply quotas, Compostela Valley is shifting to corn and indigenous root crops, and is introducing hybrid rice seeds on its uncontrollably decreasing rice fields.

"What rice crisis? Low rice production has been a problem [here] for several decades already," provincial board member Rogelio Arambala said on Thursday. But, he said, "the public need not worry since we have many alternatives to rice anyway. We're harvesting corn, bananas."

Besides, he said, panic generated by the perceived rice shortage could only be exploited by unscrupulous traders, triggering increases in rice prices.

Provincial officials met last week with representatives from the Department of Trade and Industry, National Food Authority, and the 11 municipal agriculture officers to evaluate the current standing of the province's rice supply.

According to Dr. Rolando Simene, provincial agriculturist, the shift from rice to other crops, particularly bananas, in recent years had contributed to the drop in rice production. He cited data from the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics showing that 5,581 hectares of rice lands had already been converted to banana plantations since 1980.

"To cover up [for] the loss of production due to farm conversion, we need about 5,000 well-irrigated farm lands and for us to be rice sufficient," Simene said.

Arambala said farmers could not be prevented from converting their rice fields into banana plantations "since it is their right to determine for themselves what type of crops to cultivate for them to earn."

An ideal alternative in the midst of the perceived production shortfall, therefore, will be the cultivation of cardava bananas or corn and indigenous root crops, like camote and cassava, he said.

"I also encourage the mayors to push and prioritize the cultivation of corn, particularly the white corn, in areas deemed as corn producers. They can help the farmers by subsidizing substantial amounts from their coffers for the seeds," he said.

Arambala is a former mayor of Laak, among three of the towns with the smallest areas devoted to rice farming in the province. Of the existing 11,207 ha of rice land in Compostela Valley, 5,647 ha are irrigated while the rest are rain-fed, BAS data revealed.

Compostela town has the biggest area devoted to rice with 3,086 ha covering 12 villages. Nabunturan town has the smallest with 35 ha in one barangay, for it has one of the biggest areas of banana plantations.

Arambala does not believe the province is experiencing a rice shortage. *With a report from Julie S. Alipala*

Across the NATION

Survey: Muslims say poll violence normal

'It is important to have at least two candidates…'

COTABATO CITY—MAJORITY OF THE COUNTRY'S MUSLIMS said violence is a normal occurrence in their provinces during elections, according to a recent Social Weather Stations survey commissioned by The Asia Foundation (TAF).



NEWSBRIEFS

BAGUIO CITY

Council wages war on noise pollution

COTABATO CITY

Grenade goes off, injures farmer

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan

Gov urges his people to conserve resources

BATANGAS

Batangas exec proposes 'Adopt-A-Farm' project

DOLE says peso strength keeps wage rates down

Barely surviving

Better off

Reason



5,000 villagers sign petition to stop Banahaw treasure hunters



Inquirer exec: War on 'evil' should continue

UPLB team says target should be food security



RICE STALKS at the IRRI compound in Los Baños, Laguna.

LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA—FOOD SECURITY rather than self-sufficiency should be the government's target in finding solutions to the country's rice problem, economists and agricultural economics professors of the University of the Philippines Los Baños said Thursday.

The College of Economics and Management of UPLB has formed a working group, called Rice Task Force, composed of nine faculty members to study the rice problem in the country.

In a press briefing Thursday afternoon, Dr. Liborio Cabanilla, dean of CEM, presented the group's paper "The Rice Problem and Persistent Food Insecurity in the Philippines: Is there a way out?"

The group planned to present its paper to Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap.

In his presentation, Cabanilla said the Philippines has been a classic importer of rice.

"The only time that the country ever exported rice was during the time of Marcos when there was a strong political objective in spending a lot of money to achieve a certain level of sufficiency in rice," he said.

Disadvantages

"Self-sufficiency in rice production would be costly since the Philippines has inherent disadvantages as far as rice production is concerned," Cabanilla said.

He explained that one disadvantage is the country's weather pattern which is different from Asia's major rice exporters, saying that "we are subjected to an average of 17-20 typhoons every year."

Apart from this, the configuration of the country's land is a hindrance in holding water for a long period.

"We have river systems that are not as good as major rice producers like Vietnam and Thailand. Based on the geographic contour of the Philippines, where it rains water naturally flows outside of the archipelago," he said.

He said the country does not have enough rice land and noted that the rice sector would need another 4 million hectares of rice land to be able to feed the whole population.

NFA rationalization

The Rice Task Force suggested that the government must rationalize the role of the National Food Authority in rice trade.

Dr. Flordeliza Lantican, an agricultural economics professor, said they were advocating for a more focused NFA procurement and distribution.

"When we say more focused, they should procure in areas where there is a rice surplus and the rice prices are low," she said, adding that NFA rice should be distributed to areas where there is a deficit in rice production.

The group also agrees on the proposed increase of NFA's retail price. "If they won't increase the price, the NFA will incur huge losses," Lantican said.

The NFA, she said, would be needing a bigger budget to adjust and control the buying price. —[illegible], Inquirer Southern Luzon



Probe by NBI unearths land, money schemes

BAGUIO CITY—AN UNDERGROUND NETwork of financiers, who mortgage Baguio property in exchange for short-term loans, was put on the spotlight by the National Bureau of Investigation in their probe of another group that had victimized them.

Lawyer Ricardo Pangan Jr., NBI Cordillera director, has asked the Baguio prosecutor's office to charge with estafa a government lawyer and four other suspects for forcing a resident here to mortgage a property for P250,000.

Lotis Bolden-Rombaugh, a Baguio resident now based in Hawaii, accused government lawyer Soledad Bangaoil of participating in the scheme, when she was asked last year to mortgage the lot of a couple living in La Trinidad, Benguet.

The money was never returned and the property owner turned out to be a different person, Rombaugh said in her affidavit.

The two checks Rombaugh issued to the group were addressed to Bangaoil, based on a photocopy of the bank documents attached to documents compiled by the NBI, although the lawyer, in her affidavit, said she was also duped into transacting the mortgage on behalf of the other suspects.

But what the NBI investigators also uncovered was a virtual industry of informal real estate mortgages that has thrived unregulated in Baguio for years.

William Tolete, Rombaugh's attorney-in-fact, said his employer was amazed by the large number of transactions undertaken by the financiers, who demand land titles as collateral in exchange for cash loans.

The NBI tracked down a cooperative, which lost its land rights to a financier for failing to pay its loans.

Properties have exchanged hands through this network in the last few years, NBI agents have said, under the very noses of land regulators. —Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

A CRY FOR JUSTICE!

We belong to a group composed of former ministers, workers and members of Iglesia Ni Cristo (INC). The resolve to forsake our previous belief has came about following our enlightenment by the Biblical TRUTH that *Jesus Christ is God* **unlike the un-Christian doctrine of INC that vainly attemps to deprive HIM of HIS total DIVINITY.**

As we have launched our crusade to unmask their doctrinal lies, deceit and follies in our UNTV program D'X-MAN, we have since been bearing the brunt of INC fury. Police record will show for instance of the violent incident involving a group of INC bullies (more than a hundred of them) who mercilessly manhandled to near to death no less than fourteen (14) members of our group in April 2005.

The unfortunate incident that happened in a fast food restaurant in Apalit , Pampanga was triggered by their attempt to forcibly take us into custody. Outnumbered, our defensive effort failed to prevent such violent mob action that caused serious head and body injuries to us, hapless victims who, as Christians meant no harm against them.

Ironically, however, our wounds are ridiculously deemed as "self-inflicted and thus, we were the ones charged by the police with frustrated homicide cases instead of them. This is not surprising due to their legendary influence to both national and local government authorities. Other than the threat of physical harm, legal harassments are usually employed to eliminate dissent in us, as in the case of former INC Minister Abner MARTIZANO who, upon the initiative of an INC member, he was charged with rape case, the moment he exposed of his previous group. Ironically, he committed the alleged rape while still an INC Minister but was not charged during that time for obvious reason hence, the much delayed prosecution when he already belonged to D'X-MAN is indicative of spurious motivation and bankruptcy in principle of a supposedly religious church.

Most tragic and outrageous incident that has befallen the crusading group of the D' X-MAN is the April 26, 2008 (Sunday) cold blooded murder in broad daylight of Bro. Marcos MATARO, our acknowledged leader and TV program host. He was mercilessly shot to death near San Simon North Expressway Exit in Pampanga by yet unidentified assailants riding in tandem on a motorcycle who pumped at least six (6) bullets all over his body.

This tragic incident is reminiscent of the April 18, 2003 shooting of Bro. Marciano B. Manuyag, another member of our group inside his residence Arkansas St. Christianville Subdivision, Montalban, Rizal. He was luckier than Bro. Mataro though, as he survived the multiple gunshot wounds inflicted by the frustrated murderers and that case remained unsolved to date.

While we do not as yet ascribe such murderous act to any particular person /organization, we strongly denounce and condemn the same, a despicable affront against our religious freedom and belief. The intended outcome of such "special operation" is clearly to instill fear, stifle dissent and curtail our freedom of speech which the late Bro. Mataro and our group have used to exercise only in the furtherance of the Biblical TRUTH. Face with grim challenge, we refuse to be cowed by this barbaric form of human rights violation and we will waver not in the exercise of our press freedom!

We therefore call upon the concerned authorities with this profound apeal to enforce the law without fear or favor so that the elusive JUSTICE in this benighted land shall once again prevail. We could only hope and pray.

MAY GOD HELP US!

Marciano Manuyag — **Nedie Espanol** — **Larry Erlio**

Arnel Sangle — **Lydiya Manuyag** — **Jerell de Jesus**





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A plus METRO

Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

Tech-savvy blind man sees a rosy future ahead



"IN THE PAST, I was a lousy salesman. I think being blind gave me my focus," says Marc Vergel Melencio.

By Beverly T. Natividad

LIKE ANY OTHER YOUNG AND successful entrepreneur, he stays up all night just to get the job done, micro-manages his employees and talks about raising the country's stake in the booming business process outsourcing industry.

But unlike his other counterparts, Marc Vergel Melencio, manager of Corporate Business Management and Consultancy Services, told the Inquirer that he does all these, literally and figuratively, "with his eyes closed."

The tech-savvy Melencio, whose company supplies writers on information technology-related subjects, is totally blind.

Despite his disability, he was able to put up his own outsourcing business two years ago.

At the moment, his company has seven long-term contracts with well-known antivirus firms and employs 75 technical writers, 15 of whom are blind, including himself.

Melencio lost his eyesight in 2000 after a neighbor shot him for no apparent reason.

Although the bullet did not directly hit his optic nerve—the nerve which transmits electric impulses from the retina to the brain—the pressure and heat from the impact was enough to kill the nerve, causing him to lose his sense of sight completely.

Everything in his life suddenly changed, though this, he realized later on, was not necessarily a bad thing.

"A friend told me once that things would change, but it doesn't mean that everything would took a turn for the worse," said Melencio.

Maybe he just shared the strong spirit of his namesake—philosopher Karl Marx—or maybe he needed a big jolt to know what he wanted to do with his life.

"In the past, I was a lousy salesman. I think being blind gave me my focus," he said.

Melencio, who was already a family man at the time he lost his sight, said he did not waste any time wallowing in depression and self-pity. Instead, he began to take stock of his life.

His priority, he said, was to provide for his family. With his manual skills still intact, Melencio went back to his old hobby of assembling and repairing computers with the help of his wife.

Using software that enables the blind to use a computer and surf the Internet, he went back to school and later graduated with a degree in political science from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines Open University.



The software operates by vocalizing computer commands to users to allow them to use the equipment on their own. It served as Melencio's main tool as he tried to find a job in the call center industry.

However, he was rejected thrice by companies which had no way to test blind applicants.

Eventually with the help of a nongovernment organization that looked after the welfare of people like him, Melencio was hired by a local outsourcing writing firm.

It was during his stint with this firm that he was encouraged to start his own company in 2006.

Two years later, Melencio not only has a successful business, he has also been able to give gainful employment to other disabled persons.

Of Corporate's manpower pool of 75, 15 are blind while eight are wheelchair-bound.

Melencio said all he wants to do is to work hard to propel his growing business to newer heights.

"I want to do more. I want to get more clients. More clients for us means that more people will be hired. If more people are hired, then more families will be happy," he said.

Melencio is the first to admit that although life hasn't been easy since he became blind, he intends to focus on the positive side of things.

"Try to convert adversity into an opportunity," he said, by way of advising those in his situation who may have lost hope. "Use your disability to your advantage. Use it in a proper and sustainable way."

> 'Use your disability to your advantage. Use it in a proper and sustainable way'



The Condura Race for Tubbataha



GLOBAL Pinoy

This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes of the world to secure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

Root Dog: It takes the hood to save the hood

SAN FRANCISCO—RUDY CORPUZ DIDN'T REALIZE HIS MISTAKE—a grave one—until it hit him. Well, almost. "Oh sh*t!" he said to himself as soon as his eyes locked with those of an old foe, a black gangster standing from across the street with a homie. Rudy wasn't supposed to be in enemy turf, but had to drop off a group of school kids under his care.



TOUGH GUY

Trying to fit himself in a world ruled by thugs, a young Filipino-American got hooked on drugs, became a drug dealer, and later a gang leader, bought the most expensive clothes, shoes and cars in cash, but eventually gave them all up to set a good example to all other street kids of San Francisco

China orders nationwide fight against fatal virus



STILL NO MADDIE A YEAR ON



Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking
is dangerous to your health

WorldBriefs

Vatican says it's happy Pope excluded from Time list

Austria police probe reports of past 'incest dad' sex crimes

Major powers agree on new incentives offer to Iran

London mayor ousted as Brown suffers poll rout

The WORLD

US to send more troops to Afghan war

WASHINGTON—THE PENTAGON HAS BEGUN planning to send as many as 7,000 more US troops to Afghanistan next year to make up for a shortfall in contributions from Nato allies, senior Bush administration officials said.

They said the step would push the number of US forces there to roughly 40,000, the highest level since the war began, and would require, or leave a modest reduction in troops from Iraq.

The report appeared a day after Defense Secretary Robert Gates said the United States could consider taking over Nato's command in southern Afghanistan, where some Nato allies have been reluctant to provide combat forces.

Southern Afghanistan, site of the worst in a surge of Taliban violence, is now under Nato command. Britain, Canada, the Netherlands and Australia all have forces in the region.

The planning began in recent weeks, reflecting a growing resignation to the fact that Nato was unable or unwilling to contribute more troops despite public pledges of an intensified effort in Afghanistan from the presidents and prime ministers who attended an alliance summit meeting in Bucharest last month.

The shortfalls in troop commitments have cast doubt on claims by President Bush and his aides that Nato was stepping up to provide more help in Afghanistan, where the government of President Hamid Karzai faces a resurgent threat from the Taliban and remnants of al-Qaida.

The increasing proportion of US troops, from about half to about two-thirds of the foreign troops in Afghanistan, would be likely to result in what one senior administration official described as "the re-Americanization" of the war.

A dozen Nato countries have pledged a total of about 2,000 troops, according to senior Nato officials; senior alliance commanders in Afghanistan have said they needed about 10,000 new troops.

There are about 52,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan, about 34,000 of them Americans, up from just 25,000 US troops in 2005. The US troops are divided into a force of 16,000 who operate under Nato command and an additional 18,000 who are conducting counterterrorism and other missions under US command outside of the Nato structure, according to Pentagon statistics.

The initial planning under way would send about two additional brigades of US forces, or about 7,000 troops, to Afghanistan next year. That would meet two-thirds of what commanders have projected in recent months as a shortfall of three brigades, or about 10,000 troops, including combat forces, trainers, intelligence officers and crews for added helicopters and troop carriers. AFP

Sunday SPORTS



WHAT'S INSIDE

Breakthrough for Castro, RP cageing

/A31

96 days to the 29th Summer Olympics

Beijing 2008

Beverage Masters stop Barako

Phone Pals, Aces clash today; Realtors battle Dragons

LIPA CITY—WITH ITS vaunted local crew contributing immensely at the clutch, Magnolia got back on the winning track with a 102-95 decision of Red Bull last night in a Smart PBA Fiesta Cup game at the De La Salle Sentrum here.





Jr. PBA league kicks off



Villanueva leads Manila-Baguio bike race

So virtual Battle of GM king



WESLEY So on the threshold of P100,000 champions' purse.

Masters tame Young Stars two in row

Mikee excited over Castro

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

SPORTSWATCH

Lozada swim school holds summer classes

Melligen KO's Thai foe

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE



STUART McDonald powers the Ford squad to the title.

Ford completes 1-2 SVI finish

Bago pugs seek old glory in Abap tilt

By Cedelf P. Tupas

Beverage Masters…

Breakthrough for Castro, RP caging

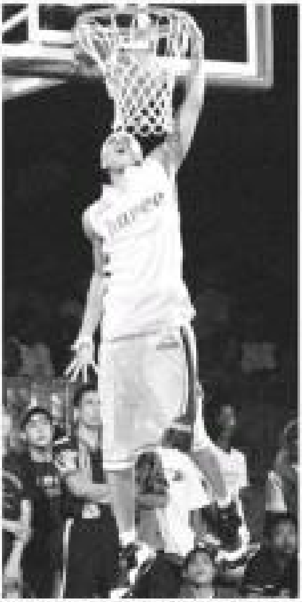
By Roy Lauron



PBL SHOWCASE

Gabe claims dunk crown

By Cedelf Tupas



FIBL: Knights defuse Bombers

CORFBALL CHAMPS



Letran edges Xavier, takes No. 2 slot



SWIM CLINIC

USJR makes V-League debut

[illegible]



[illegible]

Streaking Manila IX eyes sixth straight win

[illegible]

Milo Best holds Big City, Bukidnon cage clinics

[illegible]



NADAL: Survives scare

Hot Nadal scores 101st clay victory

BARCELONA, SPAIN—RAFAEL NADAL [illegible]

AP

SEABA YOUTH BASKETBALL

RP 5 turns back Thailand

By Jasmine W. Payo

KUALA LUMPUR—THE PHILIPPINES [illegible]



FILIPINO-American Norbert Torres gets a shot off his Thai defender.

Guba whips Ruel for Lucena title

By Cedelf P. Tupas

FORMER AGE-GROUP STANDOUT [illegible]



SUMMER VOLLEYBALL CLINIC: A volleyball clinic that aims to teach the basics of the sport to children kicks off this summer. [illegible]

Wang becomes first six-game winner

NEW YORK—WANG CHIEN-MING [illegible]

Reuters

Big Brown big Kentucky Derby favorite

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY—BIG Brown [illegible]

Reuters, AP



RACER WITH A HEART: Lance Feliciano [illegible]

Glenn Donaire targets Solis' IBF crown

By Salvo L. Lagumbay

ANOTHER FILIPINO HOPES TO FOLLOW IN the footsteps of Manny Pacquiao, [illegible]

Sunday SPORTS

CELTICS GROUNDED

Jazz, Cavs advance to next round



Fighting Hawks force seventh game

SALT LAKE CITY—THE UTAH JAZZ [illegible]

[illegible]



THE ATLANTA Hawks' Al Horford slams one home against Boston Celtics' Kevin Garnett (5) and Kendrick Perkins (43).

[illegible]



Report: Kobe named MVP

LOS ANGELES—LOS ANGELES LAKERS [illegible]

[illegible]

OSCAR De La Hoya (left) and opponent Steve Forbes pose after their official weigh-in Friday in Pershing Square in downtown Los Angeles. De La Hoya is hoping to score a spectacular victory during the fight Saturday at the Home Depot Center in Carson, California.



De La Hoya makes weight only after removing socks

LOS ANGELES—MULTIPLE WORLD CHAMPION [illegible]

[illegible]

Sunday Biz

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

The businesses that Jack built

Text and photos by Delmar Cariño
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—Jack Dulnuan's business tips are simple—live simply, learn to save and do not put money in your pocket.

Those tips, which Dulnuan, an Igorot, says he learned from his rags-to-riches experience, were the keys to building his business empire whose success had drawn much awe and envy from businessmen here and in other parts of the Cordillera.

A high school graduate, Dulnuan, 73, heads his family's chain of Jack's Restaurant and the Jack's Industrial Development Corp.—the products of hard work, guts and long hours.

Recently, he acquired corporate rights to rebuild the fledgling Dangwa Transportation Co. that needed P100 million in capital investment and stock subscriptions.

People call him simply "Jack" because he is not your typical corporate chief executive officer who comes to his office in an expensive BMW and designer clothes.

Rather, Dulnuan, called by many as "Mr. Practical" for his realistic and doable philosophy in life, has always been friendly and a hands-on manager.

He would sign checks anywhere, hold office in any of his restaurants and wear flip-flops and shorts on regular business days.

Rose Marie Dulnuan, the second of Dulnuan's 10 children, says credit for her father's success goes much to the family's trademark meal, "Jack's Rice."

"That's actually his legacy to the Cordillera," Rose Marie says.

She was referring to the all-in-one meal that has catapulted Dulnuan's name in the local restaurant business.

Ticket to success

Dulnuan was barely 12 years old when his uncle, [illegible] Dulnuan, brought him to this town from [illegible], Ifugao. He finished grade school at the La Trinidad Central School and went to the Saint Louis Boys' High in Baguio City, where he finished high school.

Being born to poor parents, Dulnuan had to work as a houseboy to survive.

Unable to go to college because of poverty, Dulnuan was forced to work as a delivery boy for the Pines Bakery in Baguio City, receiving a salary of P50 a month.

Dulnuan says he saved P1,000 after two years and 10 months of work. That P1,000 became his first ticket to success.

Using his savings, he bought a small sari-sari store in Barangay [illegible] from an owner who ordered bread from Pines Bakery and which Dulnuan delivered.

In 1957, Dulnuan, then 22, put up the first Jack's Bak-



JACK beams with pride in front of "Jack's Restaurant"

Mr. Practical started with P1,000, now owns Dangwa Transport

Start from here:

In a few years, Dulnuan managed to build branches in several parts of the town.

Then customers began asking for coffee, then bread, then meals. Dulnuan responded to their demand.

From Jack's Sari-Sari Store came Jack's Bakery. Then came Jack's Restaurant that became very popular when "Jack's Rice" was introduced in the menu.

Within the next 10 years, Jack's Restaurant grew.

"Jack's Rice" became a household name and an innovation—a complete meal that forced other restaurants to concoct their

TURN TO BUSINESSES/B4



CHOO-CHOO train

Kids like it plain, teens like exciting flavors, adults go for time-tested ones



CONEY Island

Old-time ice cream concoctions now back

By Kenneth M. del Rosario

AFTER A 10-YEAR hiatus, Magnolia Ice Cream brings back the old-time favorite concoctions that rocked the hearts of Filipinos a couple of decades back through its newly opened Magnolia Ice Cream Parlor.

[illegible]



SNOW and Bert



BANANA Split Fudge

[illegible]

The businesses that Jack built

Jack's tip: Don't put money in your pocket—you will be tempted to buy unnecessary things

From page B1

[illegible]

Expansion

[illegible]

More than 200 employees

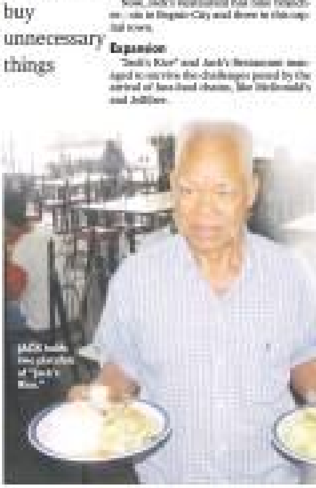
[illegible]

Business tips

[illegible]



BELIEVE it or not, Jack Dulnuan [illegible]



JACK holds two plates of "Jack's Rice."

[illegible]

Choose character

"A THICK BANKROLL IS NO HELP when life falls apart, but a principled life can stand up to the worst."—Proverbs 11:4 (The Message)

A LEADER'S WAY



John C. Maxwell

[illegible]

The lucrative business . . .

From page B4



BONSAI is a living art and the bonsai collector, an artist.

The first bonsai materials, he says, are the most sought after because they are hardwood, they are difficult to find and they have good prices.

Today he buys cuttings from a bonsai hunter in Aurora, who delivers his orders at least twice a month.

"The first bonsai I sold was a bantigue and I sold it for P33,000," Mendez says. He has sold a tree for P150,000 and two more for P140,000 and P110,000.

"It is not every day that you can sell bonsai. But if you sell one, the income can ride you over for two to three months," he says.

But from 2003 to 2005, Mendez says he was making P200,000 to P300,000 a month.

"You can sell bonsai then for P75,000 each. That was the time when every collector wanted to be punishing or buy every bonsai available," he says.

Market

Abendan also makes money by manufacturing bonsai trays in his farm.

"I had a hard time buying them from Bulacan before because you have to hire a truck [to] transport them," he says.

But at times, he says, those delivered to him were not the right sizes and they would have no use to him.

It was then, Abendan says, that he decided to study how to manufacture them.

Today, he supplies trays to bonsai dealers and collectors in the province.

"At least, I am earning now to pay the people who are maintaining my bonsai farm," he says.

Mendez says he does not see that bonsai will run out of buyers, despite the economic difficulties in the country today.

He says most bonsai buyers are rich and prominent people, and top government officials, who would drop by his garden on their way to or on their way back from northern Luzon provinces.

"There will always be bonsai buyers in the country because there are many collectors who want to simply enjoy them," he says.

Mendez says the bonsai industry is only starting in the country and it has not reached yet its peak.

"What is not good is that the material, worth P10,000, would be scouted from the country and these would be taken and trained in Taiwan for three years. When these are resold in the Philippines, the price would now be P18,000," he says.

Mendez says most of the bonsai bought from the Philippines in the 1970s to 1990s are now being sold back to the country at exorbitant prices.

Living art

Besides, he says, bonsai is a living art and the bonsai collector, an artist.

"Unlike other plants that you can leave on their own when they grow, you have to spend time designing, wiring and beautifying a bonsai. This is a long process," he says.

Abendan says that even when there are no buyers, he can just enjoy his bonsai.

"It's beautiful and sometimes, you meditate and wonder about the beauty of God's creation," he says.

Sunday Biz

The lucrative business of buying and selling bonsai



By Gabriel Cardinoza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BINMALEY, PANGASINAN—Jose "Bobby" Abarabar, 64, needed only P5,000 when he started his bonsai farm two years ago in Barangay Gayaman here.

Attachment



JOSE "Bobby" Abarabar has the single largest collection of bonsai in Pangasinan.

Good business



THE BANTIGUE, one of the most popular varieties of bonsai among collectors and traders.

A bonsai hunter's story



We don't have a care in the world — at this moment

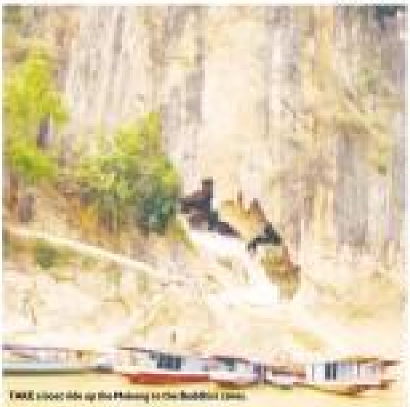
Saffron mornings in Luang Prabang

By Karla P. Delgado
Contributor

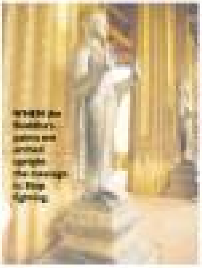
5:00 A.M., Luang Prabang, Laos. It is still dark when we awake to watch the monks do their morning rounds. The pre-dawn chill seeps in through a screen door leading to a veranda overlooking the Mekong River.

Bundled in layers and fleece, we make our way to the main street of this mountain town of 25,000 people in Central Laos.

In this corner of Buddhism with over 30 temples, no one is allowed to carry guns or weapons, not even the police. As a result, peace is the prevailing vibe.



Saffron mornings in Luang Prabang



Harmony Day





MARKET food



How to get there

Side trip to Vientiane

Philippines is gateway to Asia

Nonstop flight to Honolulu inaugurated











PALAISDAAN Restaurant and Resort in Nueva Vizcaya

Good food, clean rooms on your way to Banaue

ON YOUR WAY TO THE FAMOUS Banaue Rice Terraces and other attractions up north, don't forget to drop by Palaisdaan Restaurant and Resort.

Located along the national highway in Barangay Quirino, Bagabag, Nueva Vizcaya, the resort's fine-dining menu includes the bestselling "pinapaitan na tilapia" and other favorites like "sinulog malg" and "sizzling natural seafoods."

For travelers who want to stay overnight, Palaisdaan also offers clean, cozy air-conditioned rooms. Call (078) 332-2073.

TRAVEL BRIEFS

Leisure airlines' new destinations

SOUTH EAST ASIAN AIRLINES (SEAIR) has announced the opening of three new paradise destinations: Baler, Aurora; Daet, Camarines Norte; and Tablas, Romblon.

SEAIR now operates flights to Baler, the capital municipality of Aurora province every Monday and Friday. Flights to Daet, the capital of Camarines Norte, are now available every Tuesday and Friday, while flights to Tablas are available every Monday, Thursday and Saturday.

SEAIR uses a fleet of Dornier 328 and LET 410 aircraft. The Dornier 328 is a state-of-the-art 32-seater twin engine turboprop aircraft which allows SEAIR to fly its passengers from Manila to Caticlan in only 55 minutes—the fastest flight to Boracay offered by a local airline. The 19-seater LET 410 is ideal for small runways and other destinations where bigger airlines could not land.

SEAIR provides its passengers with as much as 20 daily flights to Boracay (Caticlan). Call SEAIR Reservations at 8490100.

Summer getaway in Taytay

Those who wish to get away from the metro's scorching heat can now wade into Club Banana Resort, which is located in Barangay Dolores, Taytay, Rizal.

Holiday makers are in for wild water fun at two 3-level cascading pools. Other sports facilities are billiards, darts, table tennis, basketball and volleyball areas. There are also a playground and fish pond.

Those who are into bargain hunting can find affordable Tiaytay at Club Banana's souvenir shop and convenience store. Call 6602091 / 2844092.

Blissful Saturdays at Bellevue

Spend a blissful Saturday at Bellevue Manila. Enjoy a weekend for as low as P6,000 net per night for local residents inclusive of buffet breakfast and buffet lunch or dinner for two.

Experience the hotel's new executive deluxe rooms complete with amenities as well as a 32" LCD television for your viewing pleasure. Unwind at the gym or swim at the hotel's pool. Enjoy the complimentary fruit plate and welcome drink at the 2920 Bar. Call 7718181.

Travel Girl search

The search is on for Travel Girl 2008. The National Association of Independent Travel Agencies (NAITAS) invites young ladies to be the tourism industry's "face" and ambassadress as it promotes Philippine tourism destinations in other countries with concerned government agencies and the private sector.

Interested applicants should be at least 2nd year in college and 5'3" in height, and can talk English fluently. Aside from the P100,000 cash prize, the winner will undergo training programs. Pageant preliminaries will be held May 26-29 and the finals night June 28 at the Cebu International Convention Center in Mandaue City. Call 8514473 / 8551560 / 9827-3004081. Or send your bio-data with close-up and full body pictures to http://travelgirl2008.multiply.com, or at Coliseum Compound 2163 Tomas St., Pasay City.

Discovery's Suite Escape

Discovery Suites in Ortigas Center offers local residents Suite Escape. Guests can avail of a three-night stay in a one-bedroom suite with a fully-equipped kitchen, spacious living and dining areas. The package is priced at P9,888+. Guests can opt to stay for two nights and use the third night within three months of original booking date. A three-day package for Junior Suites is also available at only P 6,888+. Rooms are subject to availability. Call 6358080 / 6838080.

Luxurious Marco Polo suites

For as low as P7,000 net, bask in luxury in one of Marco Polo Plaza Cebu's suites and gain access to the hotel's private Continental Club Lounge. Call 8464574 and (032) 2531111.



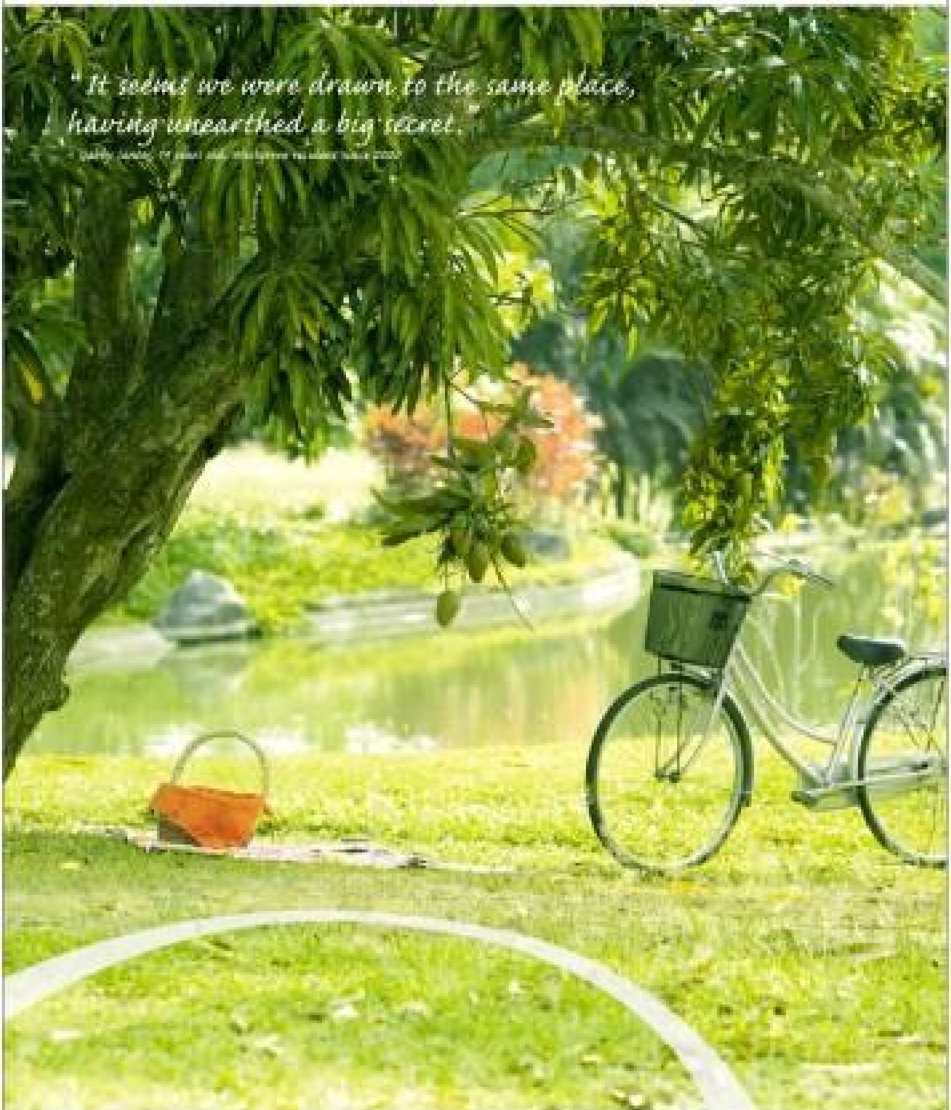








AyalaLand Premier





Meant to be together - that's how Westgrove
residents feel about each other.

Young or old, concert pianist or cardiologist,
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Sunday LifeStyle

The near-fairytale of *Juan & Bianca*



They didn't believe in marriage, but then...

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor

A Whole New World a

You don't have to be a cooking connoisseur to go gourmet. Thanks to Rustan's Supermarket, now you can bring gourmet straight into your own home.

Whether you're a food lover with a gastronomical appetite for the fresh and healthy, or you're aiming to bring out the chef in you, discover a one-stop shop for anything and everything you need at Rustan's Supermarkets in Makati-Glorietta, Rockwell Mall, Shangri-La Plaza, and Katipunan.

The well-lighted alleys and efficiently organized sections display an assortment of hard-to-find seasonings, sauces, dressings and ingredients; fresh prime beef, seafoods and veggies; imported cheeses, deli products, wines and liquor; and other everyday grocery buys for your personal and party needs.





A Taste of the World at La Gourmet

The Rustan's Supermarket Makati-Glorietta branch greets shoppers with the warm, inviting ambiance of La Gourmet, the café specializing in quintessential French cuisine. Here, customers can choose from a delectable array of imported deli items which they can savor right in the café or enjoy at home. Imported sausages such as Veal Bratwurst, Schueblig and



sumptuous cheeses like Gouda, Roquefort and Manchego, as well as Parma Ham, Italian Prosciutto and paté are just some of the many delightful deli treats available. There's also an extensive stock of imported, hard-to-find gourmet items, from Dijon mustard, Vinaigrette and Grenadine syrup to Cornichons (gherkins), Couscous Semoline and Tarragon dressing – all priced just right. Rockwell customers are in for a treat as the La Gourmet deli is also available in our Rustan's Supermarket Rockwell branch.

The World of Wines at the Vineyard

On the other corner of the supermarket is The Vineyard, which offers an impressive selection of fine wines, spirits and bubblies from around the globe. It houses over 70 red wine labels from France, Italy, Spain, the United States, Australia, Chile, and South Africa, as well as more than 30 names of delicate white and rosé wines from France, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, and the Old World.



at Rustan's Supermarkets





Rustan's Supermarket understands the importance of maintaining the right temperature of the wines to ensure they are always top quality. That is why its wine cellars, both at The Vineyard and at the warehouse, are temperature-controlled 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. And what's doubly good about Rustan's Supermarket Glorietta is that you can savor the wine of your choice either by the glass right at The Vineyard, or you can have it by the bottle and enjoy it at Le Gourmet.

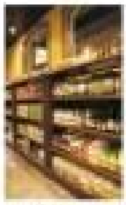
You will find an equally interesting selection of imported gourmet and deli items, as well as fine wines and spirits at Rustan's Supermarket branches in Rockwell, Shangri-La Plaza and Katipunan.

A Fresh New World

The premium fresh section, for which Rustan's Supermarket has become the name to reckon with, has also been refurbished to provide you a wide variety of the freshest seafood such as deep-sea fish, shrimps, lobsters and shellfish. Local harvests and imported meats from the US and Australia, as well as imported and organic fresh fruits and vegetables are also plentiful.

The World at your Fingertips

In addition to this world of wines, choice cheeses, delightful deli items, and farm fresh products, Rustan's Supermarket takes pride in carrying a new assortment of high quality international grocery items from France, Italy, Spain, U.S.A. and Asian countries. Items ranging from pasta, sauces, dressings, condiments, spices, chocolates, candies, and other delectable ingredients are now within your easy access and budget.



"We're continuously bringing in fresh, new, exciting items for our supermarket patrons to experience and enjoy. It's a challenge we relentlessly take upon ourselves," attests Dennis V. Tanteco, president of Rustan Supercenters, Inc. (RSCI), the managing company of Rustan's Supermarket.

Dennis stresses that "shoppers need not make an extra trip to various specialty stores just to enjoy these great food offerings". He believes that shoppers will find practically everything they want at Rustan's Supermarket. "It's a shopping experience worth coming back to, again and again," he enthuses.

Early Bird Treat

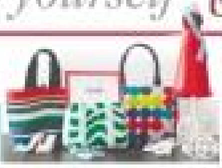
Effective May 5, 2008, Rustan's Supermarket Shangri-La Plaza will open at 9:00AM daily. All customers who make a minimum purchase of P1,000 between 9:00AM and 11:00AM between May 6 to 31, 2008 will receive a P100 cash voucher they can use on succeeding visits to any Rustan's Supermarket stores.

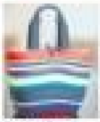
Sunday LIFESTYLE Do-it-yourself

D.I.Y.

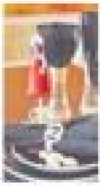
With Anton Barretto and Marissa Lopa

Make Kate Spade-inspired settings from gum paste





SO KATE Spade



Surprise your fashionista mom on Mother's Day with gifts made out of sugar

OUR DIY GUEST CAKE designer Peak Ching shares her recipe for gum paste—it's a fun and easy way to create your favorite objects and turn them into delightful decor.

Happy Mother's Day!









The near-fairytale ...

Turning points

Bond

Parenting together

Sunday LifeStyle

The world of Mandy Santos

T'nT Trends & Trendings

Anton San Diego

While expanding her fashion business, she's savoring motherhood and the comforts of home

I FIRST MET MANDY SANTOS 10 years ago when she was about to get married to her businessman-husband Duane Santos. If I was to describe our friendship, it would be like a roller-coaster ride without the dips.

In a country that has so many beautiful and stylish women, Mandy [illegible] edge with her [illegible], sharp wit and great sense of humor. She also doesn't take herself [illegible] seriously.

Mandy is the assistant general manager of Mr. [illegible], a family-owned company that manufactures [illegible] for export. She also has her own children's clothing and shoe line, [illegible], both available at Rustan's Department Store. And then again, a [illegible]

TURN TO PAGE [illegible]



MANDY and [illegible] in Disneyland

The world of Mandy Santos



MANDY and Duane Santos at the Town and Country launch



SOLENNE with Daisy Duck in Disneyland

From page E1

called Hints. She is looking forward to rapid expansion of her clothing lines this year, so watch out for that.

Mandy and Duane have a beautiful three-and-a-half year-old daughter, Solenne.

This is her world.

What is your greatest culture peeve?

Shop TV and shopping network. So addicted!

Who is the love of your life?

God.

What's a trait you most hate about yourself?

Very judgmental.

What's a trait you most hate in others?

Incompetence.

What's your favorite vacation spot?

There is no place on earth like home. Meaning my home. I guess when one travels a lot for business, home becomes the place to be. (Bring me home, Scot).

Favorite item in your wardrobe?

Love all my Stella McCartney for Adidas gear.

What do you do when you're not working?

I'm always working. Working in the office, working in the kitchen, working out!

What has motherhood taught you?

You understand your parents more, your mother in particular, why she did this, why she did that. You see your childhood in a whole new light.

Motherhood has also taught me that unconditional love really exists.

Your favorite thing to do with your daughter?

My daughter and I do everything together. She even comes with me to work, to dinners, parties. People tell me that I have to cut the umbilical cord at some point. Maybe when she's 30!

What makes you happy?

Everything makes me happy. Right now it's that Rustan's supermarket on Ayala Avenue, Makati. It has a work-



MANDY Santos at the [illegible] gala

ing wine bar! You're doing the groceries, midway you have a glass of wine or three. At the end, watch as your bill escalates. Very smart move, this Rustan's.

Would you ever have plastic surgery?

Yes, I would. Is breast enhancement considered plastic surgery?

What is your favorite guilty pleasure?

[illegible]

Naughtiest thing you've done?

[illegible]

Can you cook? What is your signature dish?

Yes, I cook a lot. Like every day for the last 10 years! I basically just cook anything. Just not the Michelin star kind of cooking.

Who are your favorite designers?

I admire so many people's works. Locally, Antonio Garcia of Mabolo, [illegible] of [illegible], Miguel Rosales, [illegible].

How do you relax?

Hanging out with my husband Duane and daughter Solenne. We sometimes hole up in the master bedroom the whole day, just the three of us, stepping out only for a bite to eat then come back to the room.

Who are your present day heroes?

GMA and Hillary Clinton.

What's one thing in life you don't have and wish you have?

I wish I had an endless supply of money to help everyone in need.

What makes you laugh?

My daughter has the most incredible sense of humor. She is fabulous. Her comic timing is amazing. She takes after my sister Mara, I think. I have a great respect for people who are I-can-command-a-room type of funny.

What are your regrets?

I have no regrets. Everything happens for a reason.

Who would you come back as in another life?

According to this healer my [illegible] took me to while I was pregnant and [illegible], I was an assassin in my last life and that is why I was suffering from severe hyperemesis gravidarum during my pregnancy as a sort of retribution. Therefore in my next life I would like to be Mother Teresa.

What do you think you'll be remembered for?

I do not want to be remembered after I am dead. What's important is how my child/children live.

Best advice you've ever been given?

I have been given so much advice over the years, each one very sensible and special. The most recent one though was quite interesting. I was told that you only need two kinds of friends. One that will defend you, and one that will lie for you. Hmmm.



MANDY Santos at the [illegible] gala

My hubby's ex can't move on

EMILY'S POST



Emily A. Marcos

Let her dig her own grave. It's her choice

The workplace is now lifestyle-friendly



Middle-class homes now entertaining more often

The 5 winners going to the 2008 Beijing Olympics



> "Just like Olympians who show amazing courage, discipline and determination, these five children were chosen for showing the spirit that makes them true McDonald's Champion Kids."



Olympic dreams are coming true for five Filipino children as McDonald's takes them to the 2008 Beijing Olympics for a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

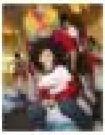
Miguel Luis Nievala of Bacolod City, Mauro John Aust of Parañaque City, Georgette Ang of Baguio City, Eloise Nice Sarapuja of Davao City and Rosario Sepilido of Silay City, Negros Occidental were chosen from 16 finalists to visit Beijing this August 2008 to take part in the biggest sports spectacle in the world. These 5 lucky children will fly to Beijing with their mom or dad to join other McDonald's Champion Kids from other countries like Singapore, Japan, Lebanon, New Zealand, Ukraine and China.



Just like Olympians who show amazing courage, discipline and determination, these five children were chosen for showing the spirit that makes them true McDonald's Champion Kids. Chosen from hundreds of children, these kids showed their winning traits during the final interview, wowing the discerning panel of judges Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski, Akiko Thomson and McDonald's VP for Marketing, Margot Torres.



The interview was a fun event and a good opportunity for the kids to show their Olympic potential. While awaiting their turn, the finalists participated in a Mini Olympics especially prepared by McDonald's for the kids and their parents. This involved relay games and an obstacle course. Winners of these activities were given toys and goodie bags courtesy of McDonald's. And even Ronald McDonald joined the fun!



Through McDonald's Champion Kids, Filipino children can prove that they are among the world's best, and that they can inspire other children to achieve greatness in any sport or any field. They can live the Olympic dream and be true champions wherever they go.

Sunday LifeStyle



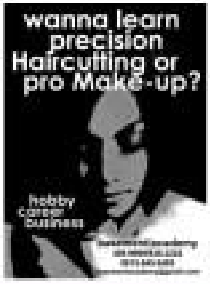
Joie de vivre and 'Oooh la la!' in Manila



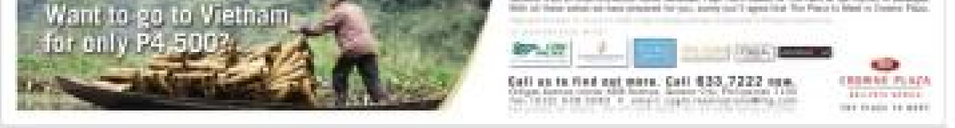
French Spring showcases its mother country's culture with much élan and fun

TESSA!
Tessa Prieto-Valdes

Unique interaction











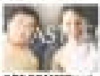




Joie de vivre and 'Oooh la la!' in Manila











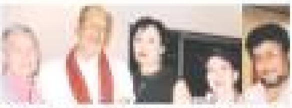


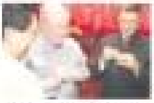
From page F1

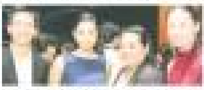


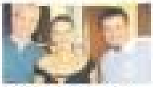




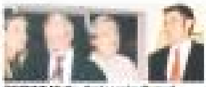








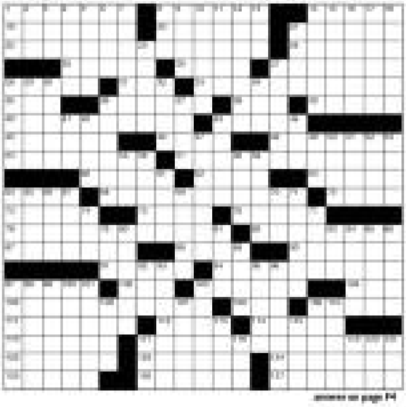




Hair guru

Sunday Crossword

PREMIER CROSSWORD / By Frank A. Longo — STATE-MENTS



answer on page F4

Biglang Awa of Boac marks golden jubilee

Purely Personal



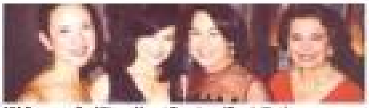
Josephine Darang



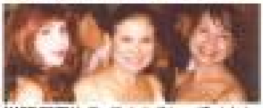
History of the devotion

Our Lady's Foundation

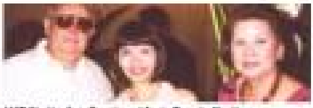
Bonsai exhibit



Mia Borromeo, Bea Villegas, Margot Osmeña and Teresin Mendezona



MARGUERITE Lhuillier, Marisplata Yeung and Tessie Javier



LUIS Abalde, Amy Gapuzio and Jossie Osmeña Abalde

Town goes to Cebu



Cebu Cebu

Jaime Picornell

THE MAY ISSUE OF THE Philippine edition of Town & Country features Cebu. That's reason enough for a party as T&C threw a bash at the Shangri-La in Mactan.

Mary Anne Aboitiz Aznalli is the cover story, and featured is the family beach house of Jon and Cheery Aboitiz in Sun Bogo. That's in the northern tip of Cebu Island.

Coming to Cebu for the occasion were the magazine's editor, **Monique Villonco**, editor at large **Mia Borromeo**, fashion/beauty editor **Borie Carlos**, associate publisher Tara Santos, and more who figure prominently in the editorial list.

The margaritas looked cool and summery draped in white. Teresin Mendezona put cells lilies in perfection. Jaime Chua brought ceiling-high bamboo in pots. Pinky Chang lent her crystal chandeliers, while Herve Lampert and Marilena Gonzales displayed their exquisite Dedon furniture all over. Fun could be on show, too.

Summit Media was the party host with Citibank, well represented by ... Shangri-La in Mactan, by ... and Landco's ... Cebu, by ... and more.

Architect **Augusto Villalon Jr.** explained that the Mactan ... is on 200 hectares of his family's estate, on top of Cebu's mountains, with breathtaking views, and a climate that is cool all year round. Of course, it's selling fast.

Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia attended the party, and so did ... Consul General of Turkey in Cebu and wife of Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Frank Benedicto, accompanied by ... Cebu City's First Lady **Margot Osmeña** came with Bea Villegas, for son Miguel's ... girlfriend.

Making a grand entrance was cover girl Mary Anne in a ... gown. Someone asked if it was a Chanel to which she quickly replied, "No, it's made in Cebu, by Cary Santiago."

Not far were her parents, **Luis** and **Annie** (née **Osmeña**) **Aboitiz**, and husband **Henk Aznalli** with their pretty kids ...

Glimpsed: ... Lhuillier. Her husband **Philippe** is Philippine Ambassador in Rome, with children Angie and **Marcia** ... **Michel** and **Marguerite Lhuillier**, who said she doesn't mind being called the Mother of Monique; and Marguerite Lhuillier striking a pose for us with **Marisplata Yeung** and architect Tessie Javier.

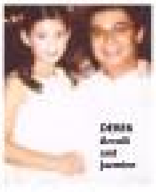
Others who came to the party were Tienny's ... and Susan Oliver; Go Ching Hai and wife, Marilou, who have just celebrated 55 years of blissful marriage, with their children Nellie and Antonette Chiu (Consul of Slovakia); Marlene Roman and Elvira La ... quite excited about the US launch of the book, "Cebu Pride of Place," with excellent photography by **Billy Mondoñedo**.

The launch schedule says May 13 in San Francisco, and May 16 in New York City under the aegis of true-blue Cebuano **Hilario Davide Jr.**, former Chief Justice and now the Ambassador of the Philippines to the United Nations.

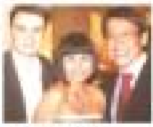
The book is published by the Arts Council, and since it's practically sold out, Marissa is planning a reprint.

The next two years will be very active for the Arts Council of Cebu, which will mark its 30th anniversary in 2010.

It has been agreed that the organization needs an endowment fund if it has to survive 30 years, or even five.



DEBBIE Aznalli and Jasmine



HERVE Lampert, Marilena Gonzales and Jaime Chua



GEMMA and Benny Gala



MARY Anne Aznalli, Monique Villonco, Marguerite Lhuillier and Borie Carlos



Goings On

Franco 'terno' featured in Flores de Mayo



CAMILLE FRANCO CREATES A WATERCOLOR-splashed terno for Melanie Adjanez, a 22-year-old fashion marketing student of LaSalle College International. Attired with Franco's creation in Congregacion del Santisimo Nombre's annual Flores de Mayo on May 4, 5 p.m. at Rajah Sulayman Park, Malate, Manila.

'Anamid' at Pinto Gallery

The Silangan Foundation for the Arts, Culture and Ecology and Pinto Art Gallery, in cooperation with the Presidential Tourism Office of the Lao Norte, are highlighting hand-made arts and crafts in "Anamid," which opens today, 3 p.m., at Pinto Art Gallery. The exhibit features hand-made items from organic raw materials, vintage and newly woven inabel fabrics from Ilocos, light sculptures of Percy Manzano made of bamboo and hand-made paper, and other bamboo items, [illegible], containers and tiles. A planned Museum of Contemporary Philippine Art, featuring Dr. Joven R. Cuanang's collection of post-Abad art will be the beneficiary of the show.

Cambe show in Quezon

Jun Jun Cambe pays homage to his ancestral roots in Tayabas, Quezon through "Cambe Homecoming." The fashion show is set on May 8, 7 p.m., at the Silangan Bayan in Tayabas, Quezon.

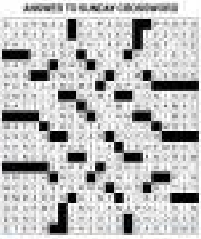
Search for mom-child team

Join Singapore Tourism Board-Philippines' Mom and Me Shopping Spree contest and grab a chance to represent the Philippines in the Great Singapore Sale International Shopping Challenge in Singapore on May 30. Deadline for submission of entries is May 9. Call [illegible], e-mail [illegible] for contest details.

Fun games for mothers

On May 10, fun events for moms will be held at World of Fun. Tongue twister, make-over, raffle and trivia games will be held at Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall, SM Lipa, SM Lucena, SM Bacoor, Megamall F-Mall in [illegible] and Robinsons Bacolod.

ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD

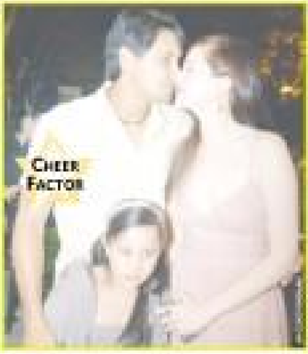




ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Bresnia G. Velarde

IN THIS ISSUE

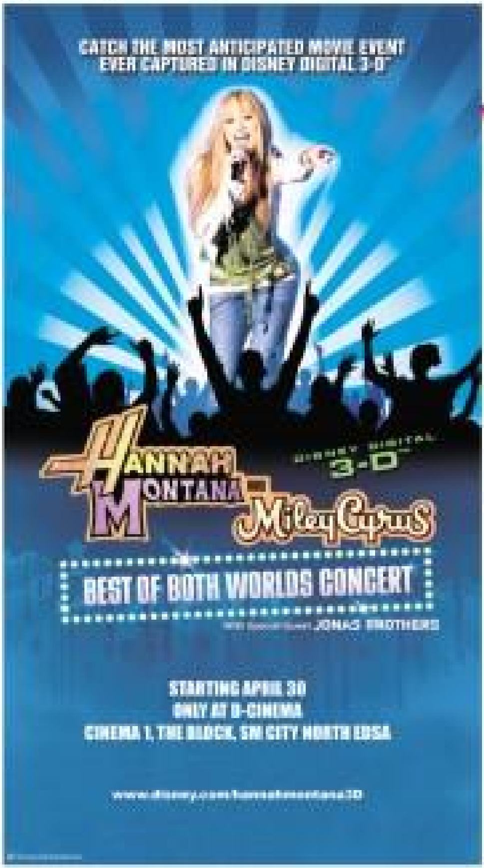


Council to fund RP teams in Cannes







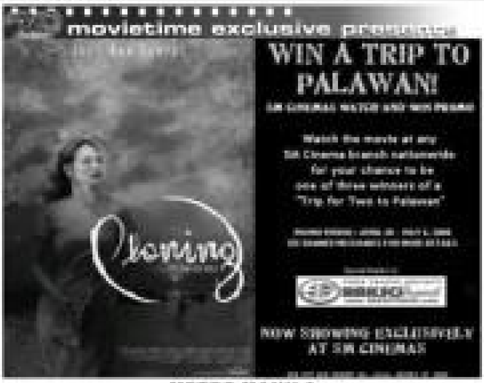




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GALLERIA

1 IRON MAN

2 IRON MAN

3 IRON MAN

4 IRON MAN

5 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

6 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

7 SUPERHERO MOVIE

8 IndieSine: TELEBISYON

9 PATHOLOGY

10 WHEN LOVE BEGINS



ERMITA

1 IRON MAN

2 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

3 IRON MAN

4 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

5 IRON MAN

6 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

7 NEVER BACK DOWN / IRON MAN

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9 PATHOLOGY

METRO EAST

1 SUPERHERO MOVIE

2 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

3 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

4 IRON MAN

5 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

6 IRON MAN

7 IRON MAN

8 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

NOVALICHES

1 IRON MAN

2 IRON MAN

3 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

4 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

PIONEER

1 IRON MAN

2 IRON MAN

3 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

4 WHEN LOVE BEGINS



STA. ROSA

1 IRON MAN

2 IRON MAN

3 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

4 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

LIPA

1 IRON MAN

2 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

3 IRON MAN

4 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

DASMARIÑAS

1 IRON MAN

2 IRON MAN

3 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

4 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

IMUS

1 IRON MAN

2 IRON MAN

3 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

4 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

ANGELES

1 IRON MAN

2 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

3 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

4 IRON MAN

STARMILLS

1 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

2 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

3 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

4 DOOMSDAY

5 IRON MAN

6 IRON MAN

BACOLOD

1 IRON MAN

2 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

3 IRON MAN

4 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

5 STEP UP 2

6 SHUTTER

ILOILO

1 IRON MAN

2 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

3 WHEN LOVE BEGINS

4 IRON MAN

5 SHUTTER

6 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

'Dyesebel' is a mixed viewing 'trick' or 'treat'

VIEWFINDER



Meanies so early in the story ended up as overkill

Slow development

Plus points

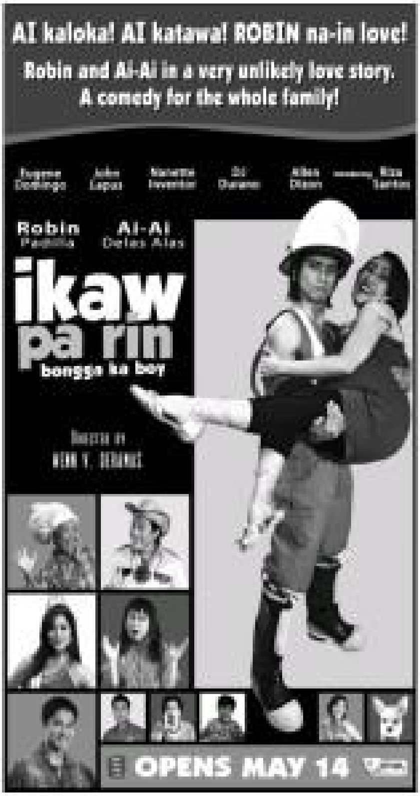
'Entourage' on HBO

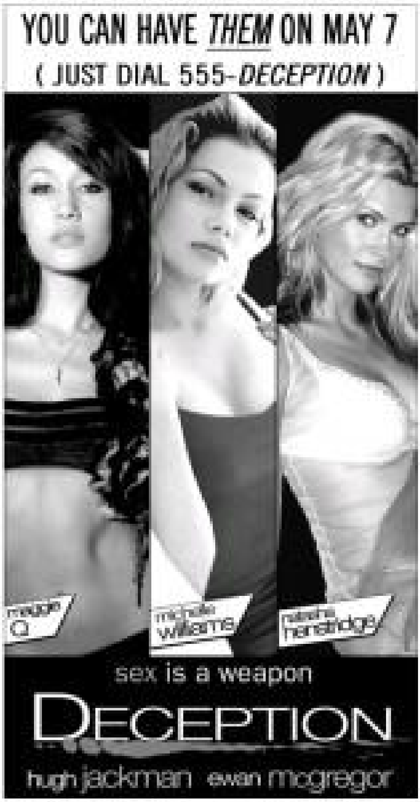
DID YOU KNOW...

Celebrity birthdays today, May 4









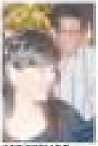














Not just wine and roses

Richard and Lucy celebrate a decade of discoveries

PARTY! PARTY!





AT THE CINEMAS

Cinema				
GLORIETTA 1	1 IRON MAN	2 IRON MAN	3 THE FORBIDDEN KINGDOM	4 WHEN LOVE BEGINS
GLORIETTA 4	1 IRON MAN	2 IRON MAN	3 IRON MAN	
	4 [illegible]	5 IRON MAN	6 WHEN LOVE BEGINS	7 THE FORBIDDEN KINGDOM
GREENBELT 1	1 THE FORBIDDEN KINGDOM	2 IRON MAN		
GREENBELT 3	1 IRON MAN	2 IRON MAN		
	3 THE FORBIDDEN KINGDOM	4 IRON MAN	5 IRON MAN	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 IRON MAN	2 IRON MAN		
	3 WHEN LOVE BEGINS	4 IRON MAN	5 THE FORBIDDEN KINGDOM	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 IRON MAN	2 WHEN LOVE BEGINS	3 THE FORBIDDEN KINGDOM	4 STREET KINGS
MARKET! MARKET!	1 WHEN LOVE BEGINS	2 THE FORBIDDEN KINGDOM		
	3 MANAY PO 2: OVERLOAD	4 IRON MAN	5 IRON MAN	
TRINOMA	1 WHEN LOVE BEGINS	2 THE FORBIDDEN KINGDOM	3 SUPERHERO MOVIE	4 IRON MAN
	5 IRON MAN	6 IRON MAN	7 IRON MAN	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls



Full house for Sean Kingston

JAMAICAN AMERICAN singer-rapper Sean Kingston performed recently to a full house crowd at Ayala Malls' Glorietta Activity Center in Makati. Accompanied by a DJ and several dancers, Kingston rendered his hits, including the signature "Beautiful Girls," about a guy who goes suicidal over the failed relationship. (This song was No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 for three weeks.)

The repertoire also included tracks from his self-titled debut, like "Take You There," "I'm Eighteen," and "Me Love." The concert was the latest in a series of Ayala Mall shows that also brought in Colbie Caillat and Jabbawockeez.

Council to fund. . .

From page G1

in Director's Fortnight, a section in the Cannes IFF that showcases works of new filmmakers. The five-hour film in plenary will be shown on May 22.

Dayrit said the council will bring six of Martin's crew members to France and pay for their stay there.

This is so far the biggest amount that the FDCP has released to subsidize films competing in festivals abroad. Last year, the council handed over P600,000 to Mendoza, whose "Foster Child" premiered in Director's Fortnight.

"The fact that we are competing is an honor worthy of national recognition," FDCP chair Jacky Atienza said in a statement. "We thank the President (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo) for her magnanimous support. Our funding is possible because of her."

Mendoza is only the second Filipino filmmaker to compete in Cannes. The first was Lino Brocka, whose "Insiang" and "Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim" were also chosen in competition.

"Serbis" was picked from out of 1,792 entries from 96 countries, said the FDCP statement.

Martin, only 23, is the youngest and only the fifth Filipino director to be featured in the Fortnight section. Aside from Mendoza, the section has featured the works of Mario O'Hara (2004), Mike De Leon (1982) and Brocka (1978, 1979).

Heading the Cannes IFF jury is actor-director Sean Penn.

(Email: movies@inquirer.com.ph)



First time director **Dante Garcia** teams up with Optima Digital to perfect their vision

A good movie doesn't only need a great script, excellent actors and skilled directors and cinematographers. The success of a movie, at least in the discerning audience's eyes, depends highly on the visual impact it creates- the "realness" of every scene, the palpability of every emotion. There is a need for the moviegoer to be able to experience the movie as a whole- as if he were really there- not just as a third party who's on the outside looking in.

Several films this year have done just that. They have made it possible for the audience to be involved from the very beginning till the time the credits roll. The directors' visions for their own films have been translated into visual masterpieces that are ready to be considered as works of art.



Judy Ann Santos in "Ploning"

PLONING, debuting director Dante Garcia's collaboration with OPTIMA, is a prime example. The Judy Ann Santos starrer was graded A by the Cinema Evaluation Board. It's a riveting tale that focuses on a young man and his quest for the meaning of the word "Ploning" in his life. Set in Cuyo, Palawan (also Garcia's hometown), the movie is a tribute to this picturesque province in the South.

Garcia, being a native of the island wanted to stay true and faithful to his vision. He wanted his audience to experience the island and all it has to offer. "Kakaiba ang isla ng Cuyo sa araw at lalo sa gabi. And I wanted my audience to feel that. Parang gusto ko maramdaman nila yung alindahok," Garcia shares.

A self-admitted "non techie" Garcia turned to OPTIMA so that his dream for Ploning could turn into reality. And that it did. Shot on 35 mm, scanned on film resolution (2048x1556) and graded on RESOLVE- Optima's advanced color grading system, the movie in Garcia's mind was even more breathtaking on the big screen. OPTIMA provided the necessary technical expertise for Garcia's dream film to come to life. The quality of color grading on the RESOLVE

The success of a movie... depends highly on the visual impact it creates – the "realness" of every scene, the palpability of every emotion.

complemented the great work that was put in by the film's director and cinematographers (Charlie Peralta and Marissa Floirendo).

OPTIMA CEO Tony Gloria explains that they have "invested in the best machines, the best software and the most talented editors, VFX artists and colorists so that we can compete with the best in the Asian Region." This dedication to world class excellence and the passion for the craft has made OPTIMA an ideal partner for both film and tv commercial directors alike.

Aside from the addition of RESOLVE RT- the most powerful Ultimate Color Grading System and the first in the country, OPTIMA has also gone thru a major upgrade of its services and facilities. These upgrades include migrating to the Linux platform that increased processing speeds and the Baxter Post Production System- the latest data scanning software in the world.

Another movie that partnered with OPTIMA is ATE, a movie by Loro Reyes starring real life sisters Ara Mina and Christine Reyes. ATE deals with human relationships and the drama that goes along with that- love, betrayal, lust and deceit. Shot on PANASONIC VARICAM HD, graded on the



Siblings Ara Mina and Christine Reyes in 'Ate'

RESOLVE RT by OPTIMA DIGITAL, the film takes its viewers on a wild ride as they, too, experience Ara Mina's love for both husband and sister. Viewing the trailer, one can almost feel the heat and intensity in the bitter that Ate (Ara Mina) shares with her younger sibling (Christine Reyes) as they fight for the love of the same man.

With these new breakthroughs in technology, there is no other way for Filipino film and commercial making to go but up. Working hand in hand with OPTIMA, directors and their audiences can only expect a masterpiece that can compete with the world's best.

For inquiries on Optima Digital's postproduction services, please contact:
Jerelada Lizardo
2nd Floor, Grandvale Mansion, 186 Perez Street
Legaspi Village, 1229 Makati City, Philippines
(632) 813-6602 to 05 · (632) 893-8716 to 17 · fax (632) 819-2673
www.optimadigital.com

OPTIMA DIGITAL



A SHOW TOO BIG FOR JUST ONE CHANNEL

TV viewers are in for an action-packed, bone crunching, and adrenaline-pumping treat with the return of one of the most high-powered TV competition shows of all time: American Gladiators! Hosted by iconic wrestler Hulk Hogan and hip family professional boxer Laila Ali, the all new American Gladiators with its re-energized format will be seen on both free and cable TV, not just on one but on two channels: C/S on RPN and Jack TV in an unprecedented move to showcase the magnitude of this highly anticipated TV competition.

American Gladiators will pit 24 contenders in three rounds of challenges where the final man and woman left standing will win a $100,000 top prize and the chance to become Gladiators themselves. These everyday amateur athletes all have a unique story to tell and have a gripping reason why they need to win, but it won't be easy as they will have to go against the show's tough, compelling group of gladiators in the ultimate David & Goliath battle.

The show has been given a fresh twist using special effects and the latest technology, like the Joust (where opponents have to knock each other off using sticks), the Assault (where Contenders have to dodge balls while firing weapons at the Gladiators) and the Powerball (where Contenders have to slam dunk balls into cylinders to score). New events like the Earthquake (where a Contender and a Gladiator will wrestle on a platform moving above the ground) will provide even higher thrills and energy.

The ultimate TV event that is American Gladiators premieres on C/S on RPN this May 8, Thursday at 9pm. Jack TV viewers will enjoy the action starting May 12, Monday at 7pm.



ENTERTAINMENT

DID YOU KNOW...







Robert Downey Jr. says he's now 'officially a black American'

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD



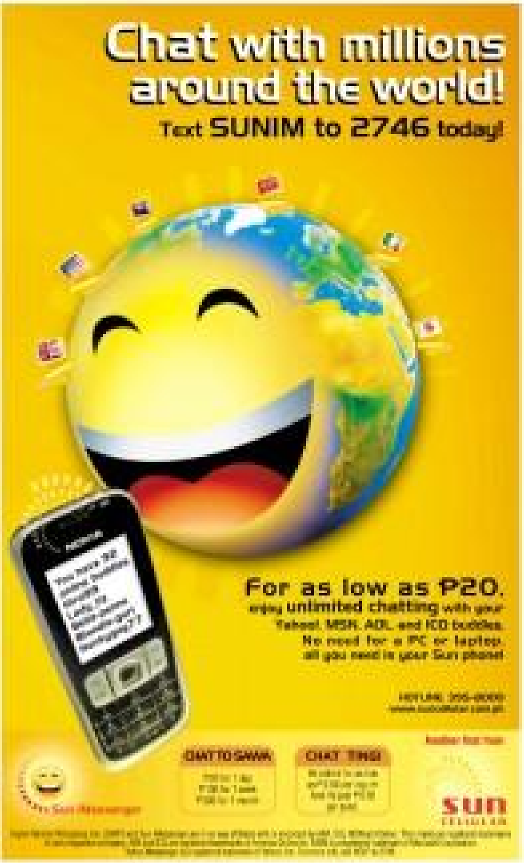
Three great actresses

Complex and ridiculous

Judi Dench

CHEER FACTOR

Her latest flub





Robert Downey Jr. . . .



Eileen Atkins



CHRISTINA Applegate

'Samantha Who?' preem on Studio 23

'Chill Spot'

Capturing Cuyo



By [illegible]
Photos by Ryan Agoncillo

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

ALTHOUGH HE'S THE boyfriend of lead star Judy Ann Santos, Ryan Agoncillo unobtrusively went about his business as photographer on the set of Dante Nico Garcia's "Ploning" on Cuyo Island in Palawan.

Unfazed by the constraints of celebrity, he says he had a field day taking snapshots not only of the movie's cast and crew, but of the local residents as well.

"I took photos of kids playing in the streets," he recalls. "I've taken photographs of children in other places, but Cuyonon kids are different. They look straight at the camera. They don't have inhibitions. It's as if they're all grown-up."

In the same way, adults on the island were easy subjects, too, Ryan recalls. "They don't mind having their photos taken, and they're not defensive in front of the camera. They have so much confidence. I think it's because they're proud of their rich culture."

One night, while huddled in front of a bonfire, Ryan showed his photographs to the cast and crew. "Everyone kept telling me to publish a book. I was hesitant at first."

Until Judai herself persuaded him. "Judai said she wanted the book to be my birthday gift to her."

Ryan says the book of photographs, titled "Ploning: The Making," is but one of his many gifts to his girlfriend who's turning 30 on May 11.

Thus inspired, he went home with 4,000 images from the island.

From that number, he narrowed it down to 600, then to 400. "By then, Go [Garcia] was already back in Manila and he helped me choose the 200 pictures in the book."

As of now, the book, priced at P1,500, is available during the film's special screenings this week, as well as in the flower shop of Roberto Alabado in Quezon City.

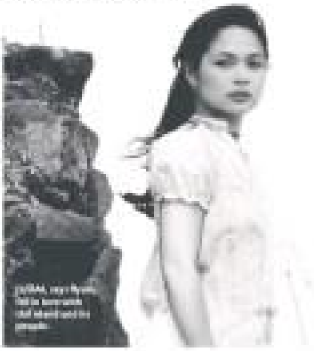
"We will put a link with contact details on the movie's website soon. We also hope to sell it in bookstores."

He admits that he has yet to process in his mind their three-week stay on the island.

"The realization is that Judai and I can work separately on the same set," he notes. "She'd act, I'd shoot. We could be together and be apart at the same time. There was constant togetherness and yet so much freedom and individuality as well."

The island allowed them to "re-experience real life. We could walk the streets and eat in eateries [illegible] food stalled. Cuyo had a profound effect on us."

(E-mail: [illegible])



LUSING, says Ryan, [illegible]



TESSIE Tomas surveys a beach with stranded fishing boats.



CREW prepares for a scene set in one of Cuyo's pristine white sand beaches.



CAMERA team, led by cinematographer Charlie Peralta, set up a spotlight in the middle of the sea for a nighttime shoot.



Addicts of various persuasions

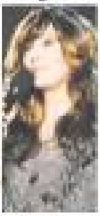
By the Inquirer Entertainment Staff

Fried chicken junkie



TOM Cruise

Husky actor up for grabs

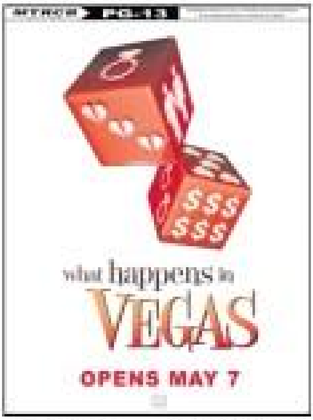


CHER

High-rolling hunk

Tale of two hosts

All about shoes



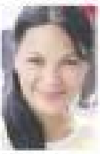




Guess who dated Tom?

Top of the tabloids

Mama knows best!



KC Concepcion

Snake, butt, ra-nise

For the money

Pregnant pause

Less than perfect



ROBERT Downey Jr. and actress Gwyneth Paltrow during a photo call for the movie "Iron Man."